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WA accepts horses from Equine Influenza-free areas

20/9/07

Agriculture and Food Minister Kim Chance said today the entry into Western Australia of 19 international horses had been approved by the Australian Director of Quarantine and would pose no threat of introducing Equine Influenza (EI).

“Eighteen of the horses were from New Zealand, which was free of Equine Influenza,” he said.

“They were transported to Perth via Melbourne last night, where they remained on board the aircraft.”

The remaining horse, imported from the United States, travelled with the New Zealand consignment to Perth after an extended quarantine period at the Spotswood Quarantine Station in Victoria.

“These horses pose no risk to WA’s Equine Influenza-free status,” Mr Chance said.

“The situation with equine influenza in NSW and Queensland does not in any way increase the risk of New Zealand horses carrying the virus.

“Similarly, the horse from Spotswood is clear of the virus, having undergone extensive testing for equine influenza, in excess of normal international requirements for imported animals, during quarantine.

“As part of routine surveillance, inspectors from the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Services and the Department of Agriculture and Food WA will meet the horses on arrival before they are moved to a property for post-entry surveillance quarantine.”

The protocol for the importation of these horses is consistent with the provisions of the national management of EI, specified by the Consultation Committee on Emergency Animal Diseases (CCEAD).

“Each animal will be confined after arrival and checked for EI once the EI incubation period has expired,” Mr Chance said.

“This measure is over and above the quarantine requirement of 100 days exclusion for animals from liver fluke areas.”

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